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faculty of music
university of toronto



SPECIAL CONCERTS SERIES

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present

VICTOR BRAUN

Baritone

Denise Massé, pianist

SUNDAY, MARCH 18, 1979

MACMILLAN THEATRE, 8:30 P.M.

An die Musik

Franz Schubert

O art that I hold dear—how often, in hours of
gloom,
when life had caught me in its savage toils,
you have kindled warm love in my heart
and have borne me to a better world!

Often a sigh from your harp,
a sweet sacred chord from you,
gave me heavenly visions of happier times.
O dearest art—for all this I thank you.

Franz Von Schober

Wanderers Nachtlied

Over every summit
is peace,
in every tree-top
you feel
scarce a breath;
the birds in the wood are hushed.
Only wait, soon
you too will be at peace.

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Ganymed

How in the morning radiance
you glow upon me from all sides,
Spring, beloved!
With love's thousandfold bliss
to my heart thrusts itself
your eternal ardour's
sacred feeling,
beauty unending!
Might I clasp you
in these arms!

Ah, at your breast
I lie, languish,
and your flowers, your grass
thrust themselves to my heart.
You cool the burning
thirst of my bosom,
sweet morning wind!
The nightingale calls me
lovingly from the misty vale.

I come, I come!

Upwards! Upwards the striving.
The clouds float
down, the clouds
bow down to yearning love.

To me! To me!
In your lap
upwards!
Embracing embraced!
Upwards to your bosom,
All-loving Father!

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

An die Nachtigall

Pour not so loudly love-inflamed songs'
rich sounds
down from the apple's blossom bough,
O nightingale!

Your sweet throat calls
love awake in me;
for already my innermost soul thrills
to your melting 'Ah'.

Sleep again then flees this couch,
and I gaze,
moist-eyed, haggard, deathly pale
to heaven.

Fly, nightingale, to green dark places,
to the woodland thicket,
and in your nest kiss your faithful wife,
fly away, away!

Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty

Im Frühling

Silent, I sit on the hillside,
the heavens are so clear,
the breeze plays in the green valley,
where, in spring's first gleam,
I was once, ah, so happy.

Where at her side I walked,
so fondly and so close,
and, deep in the dark rocky stream,
saw the fair heavens blue and bright,
and in the heavens her too.

See, how gaily-coloured spring
peeps from bud and blossom!
All blossom is not alike to me,
most gladly from that branch I'd pick
from which she once picked.

For all is still as once it was,
the flowers and the field;
no less brightly shines the sun,

and no less kindly in the stream
heaven's blue image floats.

Will and delusion, they only change,
joy alternates with quarrel,
happiness of love flies by,
and love alone remains,
love, and ah, the pain.

Oh, if only I were a tiny bird,
there on the meadow's bank,
then on these branches here I'd stay,
and sing a sweet song of her,
all the summer through.

Ernst Schulze

Der Musensohn

Rambling through woods and fields
whistling my song—
so I go from place to place.
In time to my song
and in its measure
everything about me moves.

I can scarcely wait for
the first flower in the garden
and the first blossom on the tree.
They greet my songs,
and when winter returns
I still sing of my dream.

I sing it in the wide world,
along the length and breadth of the ice—
that makes the winter blossom!
But these blooms vanish too,
and new joys are to be found
on the tilled uplands.

For as soon as I see
young people by the lime-tree
I stir their blood.
Dull fellows preen themselves,
Gawky girls turn,
to my tune.

You give my feet wings
and drive your favourite over hills and dales
far from his home.
Dear, gracious muses—
when may I rest again
on the bosom of my love?

Johann Wolfgang Goethe

Franz Schubert did not by himself invent the German Lied. He had predecessors to inspire his first attempts, but it was he who elevated the form to the level of great art and demonstrated its versatility. Over a period of 18 years he wrote over 600 songs, many of which are masterpieces.

Schubert's achievement in this field has remained unequalled. Other composers had fine melodic gifts, most notably Schumann, and Wolf showed a comparable genius for dramatic expression and psychological insight. But there is a directness and spontaneity to Schubert's genius which hides any trace of artifice. He seemed to have had an unaffected poetic nature which allowed him to respond specifically to each individual poem. When confronted with a great poem by Goethe he showed himself a great interpreter and the result in each of his 59 settings of verse by this poet is powerful and unique.

We can see his gift for poetic empathy even more clearly in his settings of minor and otherwise forgotten poems. Here, where often the poetic material can seem derivative and hackneyed, the composer seems to sense the kernel of genuine poetic impulse behind the endless series of pastoral metaphors.

Miraculously, all the Shepherds and Wanderers and other stock figures of early 19th century German verse are transformed into flesh and blood characters, and their habitats—the endless mountains, woodlands and streams—become natural scenes of surpassing beauty.

Vier ernste Gesänge, Op. 121 Johannes Brahms

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.

All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.

Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Eccles. iii. 19-22

So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.

Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

Eccles. iv 1-3

O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things: yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat!

O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy, and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience!

Eccles. xii 1, 2

Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

1 Corr. xiii 1-3

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corr. xiii 12-13

Brahms, Four Serious Songs are his last will and testament—not only musically (he wrote only the last of the organ preludes after these songs) but also personally. For it is quite clear that these songs are a personal document; that the disillusioned voice of Ecclesiastes was a sympathetic one to this intensely private composer.

The first 3 songs are all preoccupied with death: death as the great equalizer, as the universal consoler and as the only relief from inevitable injustice and unhappiness. But the 4 songs do offer some philosophical balance to this pessimistic vision. The first song suggests that there is comfort to be had in rejoicing in one's own works. And the last song (in the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians) suggests that, without love, all is indeed vanity. In setting these songs to music of such dignity and tragic grandeur, Brahms eloquently demonstrates his profound sympathy with their philosophical vision.

INTERMISSION

Phidylé

Henri Duparc

The grass is soft for sleeping under the fresh
poplars,
on the slopes by the mossy springs,
which in the flowery meadows arise in a
thousand rills.
to be lost under dark thickets.

Rest, O Phidylé! the midday sun on the leaves
is shining and invites you to sleep!
In the clover and the thyme, alone, in full
sunlight
the hovering bees are humming;

a warm fragrance haunts the winding paths,
the red poppy of the cornfield droops,
and the birds, skimming the hill on the wing,
seek the shade of the sweet briar.

But when the sun, sinking lower on its
resplendent orbit,
finds its fire abated,
let your loveliest smile and your most ardent kiss
reward me for my waiting!

Leconte de Lisle

La Vague et la Cloche

Once, laid low by a potent drink
I dreamed that amid the waves and the roar
of the sea, I rowed without a ship's lantern in
the night,
mournful oarsman, with no more hope of
reaching the shore.

The ocean spat its foam on my brow,
and the wind froze me to the entrails with horror.
The waves crashed down like walls
with that slow rhythm punctuated with silence.

Then all changed. The sea and its dark conflict
sank down. Under my feet the bottom
of the boat gave way.
And I was alone in an old belfry,
riding furiously on a ringing bell.

I stubbornly gripped the clangorous thing,
violently and closing my eyes with the effort,
the booming made the old stones tremble,
so unceasingly did I activate the heavy swinging.

Why did you not say, O dream, where God
is leading us?

Why did you not say if there is to be no end
to the useless toil and the eternal strife
of which, alas, human life is made!

François Coppée

Extase

On a pale lily my heart sleeps
a sleep sweet as death . . .

Exquisite death, death perfumed
by the breath of the beloved . . .

On your pale breast my heart sleeps
a sleep sweet as death . . .

Jean Lahor

Le Manoir de Rosemonde

With its sudden and voracious fang,
like a dog, love has bitten me.

By following the blood I have shed,
go! You will be able to follow my trail.

Take a thoroughbred horse,
set out, and follow my arduous way,
bog or hidden path,
if the ride does not exhaust you!

In passing where I have passed,
you will see that alone and wounded,
I have ranged this sad world,
and that thus I went to die

far away, far away, without discovering
the blue manor of Rosamund.

R. de Bonnières

Lamento

Do you know the white tomb
where sways with a plaintive sound the shadow
of a yew tree?

On the yew a pale dove,
sad and alone in the setting sun, sings its song.

One would say that the awakened soul
weeps under the earth in unison with the song,
and the distress of being forgotten
laments in a cooing very softly.

Ah! nevermore near to the tomb
shall I go, when evening descends in its dark
cloak,
to listen to the pale dove,
singing on the branch of the yew tree its
plaintive song!

Théophile Gautier

Chanson Triste

In your heart moonlight sleeps,
gentle summer moonlight,
and to escape from the stress of life
I will drown myself in your radiance.

I will forget past sorrows,
my love, when you cradle
my sad heart and my thoughts
in the loving peacefulness of your arms.

You will take my aching head
Oh! sometimes upon your knee,
and will relate a ballad
that seems to speak of ourselves.

And in your eyes full of sorrows,
in your eyes then I will drink
so deeply of kisses and of tenderness
that, perhaps, I shall be healed . . .

Jean Lahor

Duparc was an extraordinarily self-critical composer who destroyed almost all of his compositions except for the 14 songs. It is an eloquent testament to their qualities that these few works have been enough to gain him recognition, along with Fauré, as one of the creators of the characteristic French art-song, the "melodie" in collaboration with the "Poètes du Verbe" of the Parnassian and Symbolists schools.

His powerful melodic gifts, his orchestral imagination and his sensuous chromaticism provided a perfect setting for the voluptuous poetry that attracted him.

Six Songs from "A Shropshire Lad"

George Butterworth

This cycle of 6 songs is taken from one of the most popular collections of poems in the English language "A Shropshire Lad" by A.E. Houseman (1859-1936) published in 1896. The collection became a classic almost immediately owing to the simplicity and clarity of its style, its verbal perfection and by the universality of its theme which is one common also to the poetry of Ecclesiastes—the indifference of nature and the inevitability of death. This setting by the British composer, George Butterworth (1885-1916) was written in 1911.

Sleep
Sigh no more, ladies

Peter Warlock

These 2 settings by the English composer Philip Heseltine (or Peter Warlock as he called his composer self) are both based on poems from the Elizabethan period.

The first song is a setting of a lyric poem by John Fletcher (1579-1625). The second is a setting of a song from Shakespeare's comedy *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Notes by Bruce Vogt.



Coming Events: **Sunday, March 25th**—University of Toronto Concert Choir, conductor: John Tuttle. Macmillan Theatre 3 p.m.

Sunday, April 1—University of Toronto Concert Band, Conductor, Ronald Chandler. MacMillan Theatre, 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 7—University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra, conductor, Victor Feldbrill. MacMillan Theatre, 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 8—University of Toronto Wind Symphony, Conductor, Melvin Berman. MacMillan Theatre, 3 p.m.

Victor Braun, baritone appears by arrangement with Harold Shaw